

CSN Redesign Proposal

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Over the past several years, there has been considerable discussion on the role, viability and operational structure of the Children's Services Network Council. This process has utilized several facilitated strategic planning meetings, member surveys, open discussion at CSN meetings, and most recently, a workgroup made up of members of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee discussion. The following is the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Assumptions:

1. This proposal is based on a commitment to the mission, values and purpose previously established for the Children's Services Network Council, with the sole intent to fulfill the CSN mission more efficiently and effectively.
2. There is a consensus that for a number of reasons, the effectiveness and relevance of CSN has waned over the past few years.
3. Restructuring is essential to achieve the mission and purpose for which CSN was originally created: to revitalize participation and activities and to promote greater accomplishment and outcomes for children and families in San Luis Obispo County.
4. Restructuring CSN should be the goal for FY 2007/2008.

Restructuring Objectives:

1. Narrow and focus the priorities and activities of CSN.
2. Establish concrete goals for CSN with measurable outcomes.
3. Improve CSN's ability to impact the decision-making process affecting children and families in SLO County.
4. Implement a multi-level structure for accomplishing specific goals and tasks.
5. Improve CSN's productivity.

Proposal Outline:

The basic restructuring design is to establish four (4) levels of CSN participation, decision-making, activity and support. The four levels will consist of:

1. **Executive/Policy Level:** This level will replace the current CSN Council and will be responsible for identifying policy priorities; coordinating advocacy efforts; organizing planning and/or implementing activities; reviewing outcomes and results; and developing solutions to critical children/family services, system or funding issues.
2. **Support Level:** This level includes the CSN Manager position, financial support and related issues, and ad hoc committees, workgroups and/or task forces involved in designing, coordinating, implementing and evaluating activities in support of policy priorities.

3. **Implementation Level:** At this level CSN member agencies incorporate, implement, promote or make operational policies, initiatives, activities or outcomes adopted by the CSN Council. This could include specific agency or program partnerships, advocacy with elected policymakers, program development, data collection, et cetera.
4. **Affiliate Level:** This level is characterized as the periodic interaction between CSN and the broader array of community-based partners or organizations. This could include the annual CSN conference, encouraging greater participation in monthly SLO-CAP meetings or other forums for information sharing, or conducting a broad-based meeting to determine gaps in services to be prioritized by the CSN Council.

Implementing this plan will dramatically change the current form and function of CSN. Membership, meetings, committees and activities will change, but there will be a much more cohesive, involved collaborative structure in place to fulfill the mission of the CSN, *“advocacy to meet the needs of the children, youth and families of San Luis Obispo County through development and support of community partnerships.”*

PROPOSAL DETAILS

- 1) **Executive/Policy Level:** The most significant changes will occur at the Council level. These changes will affect membership, meetings and function.
 - a) **Membership Criteria:** CSN Council membership will be limited to specific stakeholder agencies from the public and private sectors that provide direct services to children and families or conduct activities that have a substantial impact on children and families countywide. There will be two ‘at-large’ rotating members appointed annually by the Policy Council.
 - i) The representative from the member agencies must be the agency Director, Chief Executive or Chair, with only occasional use of an alternative.
 - ii) Member agencies must agree to regularly attend CSN meetings.
 - iii) Member agencies must be willing and able to commit resources and support CSN decisions and activities.
 - iv) Public agency membership would include County Departments serving or impacting children and families and the County Office of Education, representing school districts.
 - v) Community-Based Organizations must meet the following additional criteria:
 - (1) Be administratively based in San Luis Obispo County;
 - (2) Provide multiple services to children and families countywide or conduct activities which have a substantial impact on children and families countywide; and
 - (3) Fully support and integrate CSN vision, mission, values and outcomes.
 - vi) There will be two ‘at-large’, rotating seats on the Council. These seats would be for a

set term, i.e., one or two years, and be appointed by the CSN Council. These rotating seats would provide for broader representation from groups or agencies that do not meet membership criteria.

(1) At-large members could include some prior CSN members, i.e., TCRC, Juvenile Justice Commission, League of Women Voters, the United Way, Child Care Council, SELPA, et cetera.

(2) These appointments will be tied to priority issues identified by the Policy Council.

b) Members: The Executive Committee is recommending:

i) Public Agency Members:

(1) Department of Social Services

(2) Probation

(3) County Health Agency

(4) County Administration

(5) County Sheriff

(6) County District Attorney

(7) County Superintendent of Schools

ii) Community Based Organizations:

(1) Economic Opportunity Commission

(2) Transitions – Mental Health Association

(3) Family Care Network, Inc.

(4) San Luis Obispo Child Abuse Prevention Council

(5) Latino Outreach Council

(6) First Five Commission

There is currently one seat on the First Five Commission designated for a representative from the Children's Services Network Council. The Children's Services Network Council will appoint this representative who will in turn, serve as the First Five Commission Representative on the Children's Services Network Council.

iii) The two rotating members will be appointed by the new Council.

c) Meetings: It is recommended that the CSN Council meet quarterly, with the following exceptions:

i) Initially, CSN restructuring may require greater frequency of meetings.

- ii) An annual “needs assessment-gaps in services” meeting with a very broad representation for public input.
 - iii) An emergency meeting necessary to address an urgent or critical issue.
- d) Function: The primary function of the CSN Council will be to:
- i) Communicate purposely and candidly at the CEO/Director level about issues impacting children and families;
 - ii) Conduct an annual needs/gaps in services assessment;
 - iii) Identify policy priorities to be addressed by CSN;
 - iv) Coordinate advocacy efforts;
 - v) Organize planning and/or implementing activities;
 - vi) Review outcomes and results; and
 - vii) Develop solutions to critical children/family services, systems or funding issues.
 - viii) Perform required fiduciary responsibilities, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Determining funding allocations for designated collaborative projects, i.e. CAPIT, CBCAP & PSSF.
 - (2) Managing the CSN conference and training fund.
- e) Format:
- i. CSN Council meetings will change from an information sharing/reporting focus to an action/activity focus.
 - (1) In the alternative, prior CSN participants will be encouraged to participate in monthly SLO-CAP Council Public Forums.
 - ii. Council activity will be driven by the prioritized needs-assessment process, including current critical needs, system issues (i.e., the issue resolution process), critical legislation, budget issues, new initiatives, et cetera; or other miscellaneous requirements such as grant support, CSN conference planning, programs requiring collaborative approval, oversight and approving projects, and/or recommendations from CSN workgroups.
 - iii. The Council will initiate specific actions to be taken at the Support and Implementation Levels which could include:
 - (1) CSN Manager tasks and activities;
 - (2) Ad hoc committees, workgroups, et cetera;
 - (3) Agency specific actions or activity; and
 - (4) Public relations, advocacy, communications, et cetera.
 - iv. CSN Council actions will be carefully limited to what is consistent with Council established priorities and are reasonable to complete with the resources available to CSN.

- v. CSN Council will approve and monitor CSN initiated projects/activities, issue an annual report and conduct an annual presentation to the County Board of Supervisors.
- 2. **Support Level:** This is the level where a substantial amount of work will be accomplished. Key component to this level include:
 - a. The CSN Manager will have a broader “managerial” role, being the primary overseer and manager of CSN activities.
 - b. Ad hoc committees, workgroups and/or task forces would be established on an “as-needed basis” in designing, coordinating, implementing and/or evaluating activities or advocacy in support of CSN action priorities.
 - i. There will be one initial standing committee – SAFE Management Committee
 - c. Participation at this level could be very broad, depending on the issue, including all key stakeholders and consumer representatives needed for issue input, solutions/idea creation and effective decision-making.
 - d. At this level, detail is added to idea.
- 3. **Implementation Level:** At this level, CSN member agencies will incorporate, implement, promote or make operational policies, initiative, activities or outcomes adopted by the CSN Council. Activities at this level could include:
 - a. Specific multi-agency or program partnerships;
 - b. Collaborative advocacy with elected policymakers;
 - c. Program implementation with the multi-agency support and collaboration;
 - d. Implementing data collection consistent with and supporting CSN established outcomes; and/or
 - e. Staff training and development consistent with CSN adopted practices and service delivery philosophy, i.e., wellness and recovery, wraparound, best practices, et cetera.
- 4. **Affiliate Level:** This level is characterized by the periodic interaction between CSN and the broader array of community-based partners or organizations. Examples could be:
 - a. CSN Annual Conferences
 - b. CSN sponsored forums, training and education workshops, community meetings, et cetera
 - c. Encouraging greater CSN membership participation in other multi-agency, information sharing meetings/committees, i.e., SLO-CAP, United Way Advisory Committee, Nonprofit Support Center Executive Roundtable, annual Collaboration Forum and the numerous advisory committees that are open to the public.
- 5. **An Example of a Restructured CSN Council Action:** The following is a hypothetical example of how the restructured CSN Council will work.

- a. CSN Council determines through its needs-assessment process that there is a problem with an increased high school dropout rate.
- b. At the Support Level, a workgroup is convened with key stakeholders, e.g., school personnel, probation, parents, DSS, mental-health, law-enforcement, other CBOs, et cetera.
- c. This workgroup conducts an analysis of the problem, develops several viable solutions and makes a recommendation to the CSN Council.
- d. CSN Council adopts a plan that is then pushed to the Implementation Level.
- e. Implementation could involve:
 - i. Advocacy with public policymakers
 - ii. Changing policies and/or practices within key organizations
 - iii. Supporting agencies pursuit of additional funding to address the issue
 - iv. Public relations and media campaign
- f. The CSN Manager will be responsible for orchestrating the process, meetings, developing written plans and preparing reports.
- g. At the Affiliate Level there could be a CSN Conference or public forums focusing on the issue and/or presentations given at any number of collaborative forums as a means of bringing attention and stimulating action.

INITIAL NEW COUNCIL TASKS: (Not in priority order)

- 1. Elect chair and chair elect (vice chair)
- 2. Revise CSN Continuing Resolutions
- 3. Appoint rotating members
- 4. Presentation to County Board of Supervisors
- 5. Clarify CSN Manager role
- 6. Initiate strategic planning discussion
- 7. Conduct critical needs/gaps in services assessment forum